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Memorandum for: RECORD

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EURM84-10124

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Memorandum Record

Subject: Cyprus: A Changing Military Balance?

Attached is a typescript memorandum concerning the military situation on Cyprus. It addresses the present military balance on the island and the possible effects of Greek Cypriot arms purchases and Greek reinforcements for the Cypriot National Guard. I hope you will find it useful.

Attachment

EUR M 84-10124  
14 June 1984



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## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

14 June 1984

## Cyprus: A Changing Military Balance?

Summary

Since the 1974 invasion, the Turkish Army has been the dominant military force on Cyprus. Except for some additional artillery, the Army retains essentially the same equipment it brought to the island in 1974; its manpower level has declined from a post-invasion high of about 40,000 men to a probable strength of some 20,000 to 23,000 men. Nevertheless, the quantitative balance of forces remains in Turkey's favor.

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The Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence last November precipitated a new surge in arms purchases by the Cypriot National Guard (CNG) and has raised the prospect of a major Greek reinforcement of Cyprus. Armor, air defense, and antitank weapons are now priority items in the Cypriots' procurement program for the next two years. Over the last six months, the Greeks have offered to send up to 15,000 troops to Cyprus at the Cypriots' request

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If the CNG acquires considerable air defense, antitank weapons or tanks to offset the Turkish air and armor advantages, or if Athens were to commit a division of 15,000 Greek Army troops to

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] the  
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be addressed to [redacted] Questions and comments may [redacted] 25X1  
Division Chief of the European Issues

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Cyprus - as has been discussed by Athens and Nicosia - the military balance would be substantially altered. In either case we would expect the Turks to respond with a reinforcement of their own, thus increasing the danger that a cycle of action and reaction would lead to new hostilities. [redacted]

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\* \* \* \* \*

### The Present Balance

The military balance on Cyprus remains in favor of the Turkish Army force on the island. The Turks have an almost 2:1 manpower advantage and, despite Greek Cypriot arms purchases since 1974, retain both a quantitative and qualitative advantage in weapons and firepower. [redacted]

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#### Turkish and Turkish Cypriot Forces. [redacted]

[redacted] the Turks have retained most of the weapons and equipment sent to the island in 1974, have added some 30 artillery pieces, and have enlarged their ammunition stocks (see Table 1). Most of the Turkish equipment, however, is aging, and some is inoperable. [redacted] since 1975 the Turks have also brought in MILAN antitank guided missile (ATGM) launchers, G-3 assault rifles, and Mercedes Unimog trucks. [redacted]

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The Turkish force consists of a corps headquarters and two understrength divisions, plus the 650-man Turkish National Contingent authorized by the 1960 Cypriot constitution.

Estimates of Turkish Army strength on Cyprus range from a low of 17,500 (according to the UN Forces in Cyprus) to a high of 34,000 [redacted]. Based on our

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analysis of all-source reporting [redacted] we believe the strength is between 20,000 and 23,000 troops; this is down from about 40,000 immediately after the 1974 invasion. [redacted]

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The Turkish Army troops are supplemented by a 4,500-man Turkish Cypriot Security Force (TCSF). [redacted]

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[redacted] that the TCSF is equipped with materiel supplied by the Turks or captured from the CNG in 1974. Since January there have been indications that the Turkish Cypriots, with some assistance from Ankara, have taken initial steps aimed at improving their equipment holdings. According to defense attache and other

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reporting, German tanks, Spanish and Soviet multiple rocket launchers, and armored personnel carriers (APCs) are being considered for purchase. [redacted]

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Although the Turks may be looking at new systems for the TCSF, we believe Turkey's economic plight will limit their purchases. Turkey is almost totally dependent on foreign assistance for its own day-to-day military operations and force modernization. Over the short term, in our opinion, any Turkish deliveries to Cyprus probably will be intended more as a morale booster than as an increase to military capability. We believe that the TCSF will remain a poorly trained and equipped force that would be of little consequence in a military confrontation. [redacted]

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Greek and Greek Cypriot Forces. The bulk of the force opposing the Turkish troops is made up of the Cypriot National Guard (CNG), with 11,000 to 12,000 men. These troops are supplemented by 2,500 to 3,000 Greek Army soldiers, including a 950-man Greek National Contingent allowed under the 1960 constitution and commanded and trained by 500 to 1,000 Greek Army officers and NCOs on loan to the CNG. [redacted]

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Following its defeat in 1974 the CNG began a vigorous effort to replace old British equipment and Soviet weapons (see Table 2). To date their purchases reportedly have included:

- 200 recoilless rifles from Israel;
- 120 Cascavel armored reconnaissance vehicles (with a 90-mm gun) and 15 or 16 Jararaca scout cars from Brazil;
- at least 36 105-mm howitzers, eight multiple rocket launchers and at least 20 20-mm antiaircraft artillery pieces from Yugoslavia;
- about 12 Soviet-made SA-7s, probably from Syria;
- as many as 30 Chaimite armored personnel carriers from Portugal;
- about 70 French-made MILAN ATGM launchers, probably from Greece; and
- 600 LAW antitank weapons [redacted]

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The CNG has not yet acquired major "tripwire" items such as tanks or sophisticated surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems. [redacted]

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Relative Capabilities. Short of a major Greek intervention with the consequent risks of a broader Aegean conflict, we believe the Turks should be able to dominate any military conflict on Cyprus, although at a greater cost than during previous confrontations. The Turkish Army, despite the age and poor condition of its equipment, outnumbers the CNG, has a much larger tank force, has air support only 30 minutes away, and has more manpower available for early reinforcement from mainland Turkey. It also has relatively greater resupply capabilities because of the proximity of the Turkish mainland. [redacted]

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While the CNG is better equipped than it was in 1974, in our view it still could not engage in offensive operations other than small-scale localized efforts. It has no armor and no air force or navy; it would be completely dependent on Greece for air and naval support which the Greeks might not be able to provide because of distance. In addition, because of its smaller numbers in peacetime, the CNG would have to undergo an extensive reserve mobilization before launching an attack, thus warning the Turks of impending hostilities and pitting reserves against what is essentially a regular Army force. Given these deficiencies, we believe the Cypriot National Guard would probably lose any major clash with the Turkish Army, although it would most likely acquit itself better than it did in 1974. [redacted]

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#### Factors that Could Alter the Status Quo

Since the Turkish Cypriots declared independence last November, the Greek Cypriots have accelerated their quest for new arms to make substantial improvements in the CNG's capabilities. The Greeks and Greek Cypriots also have been discussing the possibility of sending additional Greek Army troops to Cyprus. We believe that either of these developments would be viewed by Ankara as a significant alteration of the status quo and would likely precipitate a military response. [redacted]

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Greek Cypriot Arms Purchases. Armor, air defense, and antitank weapons are priority items on the Cypriots' modernization agenda. [redacted]

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In March, Greek Cypriot Defense Minister Veniamin visited France and signed a contract for at least 80 APCs. [redacted] the contract may also have included tanks, SAMs, artillery, and air defense weapons. [redacted]

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The CNG has long expressed an interest in purchasing tanks, but there is no verification that they have signed a contract. They have talked about buying Soviet-model T-55s from Romania or Yugoslavia, [redacted].

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The Cypriots reportedly estimate that they will need over \$546 million over the next two years for equipment purchases. We believe this will probably come from a combination of national funds, Greek monetary assistance, and low percentage financing from the arms manufacturers\*. In addition, the Greeks will probably act as an intermediary in arranging arms deals as we believe they have done in the past. We doubt that the Cypriot economy alone can support a program this large because the cost is about one-fourth of its estimated GNP for 1983. [redacted]

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Greek Reinforcement of Cyprus. The Greeks have been considering sending more troops to Cyprus at least since the Turkish Cypriots declared independence.

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Although we believe the Greeks might well agree to send as many as 5,000 troops to Cyprus as a demonstrative measure, in our opinion Prime Minister Papandreu and the Greek military leadership are unlikely to consider sending 15,000 or so troops except as a last resort.

- A major reinforcement would significantly alter the military status quo, and both the Turks and Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash have warned the Greeks that they would not tolerate such a change in the military balance.
- Given the threat they perceive from Turkey, we believe the Greek military would not want to risk what would amount to a 10-percent reduction in the Army's mainland strength. Furthermore, it would take some time to marshal this force, thereby giving the Turks warning and allowing them time to prepare their own reinforcements. Moreover, a large force would have to move by sea and would be vulnerable to attack from Turkish submarines and aircraft.
- If, for some reason, the Greeks were compelled to make a military move in reaction to developments on Cyprus, it

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would be easier for them to do so in the Aegean, where their options are less limited and their air and naval capabilities are not constrained by distance as they are on Cyprus. For example, they could build up installations or increase troop strength on their Aegean islands, or they could extend their reconnaissance patrolling area in the Aegean. [redacted]

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Turkish Perceptions. The Turks have already made known their concern about the large numbers and variety of equipment that has arrived in the southern part of the island. They have complained publicly about what they characterize as a Cypriot offensive buildup, and Ankara has warned that it may take steps to redress the situation. Acquisition of sophisticated SAM systems or tanks and APCs, in addition to giving the CNG capabilities which it lacks, would challenge the Turks' biggest advantages - air power and the only significant armor force on the island. [redacted]

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According to the US Embassy, senior Turkish military commanders on Cyprus are confident of their ability to deal with any threat from the south, even if the CNG is reinforced by Greek troops. Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash and the Turkish government, however, have publicly stated that they will not tolerate such a change in the military balance on Cyprus. [redacted]

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### Outlook

Relations between the Greek and Turkish communities on Cyprus are at their lowest point since the Turkish invasion in 1974. The political and psychological differences between them are widening, and the prospects for indefinite stalemate and military confrontation have increased markedly since November. [redacted]

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Following last month's UN Security Council session on Cyprus, Cypriot Foreign Minister Iacovou indicated that his government will proceed with its military buildup, claiming that it has no choice in the matter. Despite Ankara's denunciations of a Cypriot arms buildup and its warnings about changes in the military balance, we believe the Turkish government would not be willing to risk an open military confrontation on the island. However, we think the arrival of significant Greek reinforcements, modern SAM systems, or substantial numbers of armor--particularly tanks, but also well-armed APCs--probably would precipitate a Turkish military reaction. In our opinion, the Turks most likely response would be to reinforce their own troops--perhaps building back up to two full divisions--to maintain their military advantage. [redacted]

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Given the highly tense political atmosphere, any activity on either side of the island that is seen as a change in the military balance probably would start a cycle of action and reaction, resulting in a greater possibility for hostilities on Cyprus. [redacted]

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Table 1

TURKISH ARMY EQUIPMENT ON CYPRUS

<u>Equipment Type</u>	<u>1974-1975</u>	<u>1984</u>
<u>Armor</u>		
M-47/48 tanks	175	175
M-113 <sup>a</sup>	50	70
<u>Field Artillery</u>		
105-mm towed howitzers	60	90
155-mm towed howitzers	8	12
*105-mm self-propelled howitzers	12	12
<u>Air Defense Artillery</u>		
40-mm air defense artillery guns	28	28
quadruple barrel .50-caliber air defense machine guns	88	88
<u>Antitank Weapons</u>		
3.5-inch rocket launchers	1600 (est)	1625
57-mm recoilless rifles	70 (est)	76
75-mm recoilless rifles	80 (est)	82
106-mm recoilless rifles	80 (est)	124
M-72 LAW (66-mm)	unk.	1270
*Cobra ATGM launchers	0	36
*MILAN ATGM launchers	0	unk.

Mortars

81-mm	unk.	146
4.2-inch	unk.	78
120-mm	0	24

\*Modern systems

<sup>a</sup>We estimate that approximately 70 vehicles based on the M-113 chassis are currently on Cyprus. These include M-113 armored personnel carriers, M-106 mortar carriers, and command versions of the M-113.



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Table 2

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Table 3

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